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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 30, 1958

SUBJECT: Chancellor Adenauer's Interview with Mr. William Randolph Hearst, Jr.

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Wilhelm G. Grewe, German Embassy
The Secretary
Mr. Douglas Dillon - W
Mr. Robert H. Harlan - GEA

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In the course of a call on the Secretary, Ambassador Grewe indicated he thought it might be useful to give the Secretary his comments on the Chancellor's recent interview with Mr. Hearst, a transcript of which he had.

The Secretary indicated he would be most interested in any such comments, because he was somewhat bewildered by the reports he had seen of this interview.

Ambassador Grewe said that the main point seemed to be that the Chancellor did not say he was resigned to an omission of any discussion of German reunification from a summit conference; he did say it would not be wise to prepare a detailed agenda, but it was of the utmost importance that some sign of good will be obtained from the Soviets. The Ambassador said this certainly meant that there should be substantial diplomatic discussions. He noted that just two days ago Mr. von Eckhardt had stressed the German Government's views as to the importance of using the Geneva Conference as a point of departure for the next summit conference. He said the Chancellor also discussed in general terms with Mr. Hearst the question of permanent committees, but that it was not the Chancellor's intention to resign himself to the abandonment of the importance of the reunification problem.

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The Secretary said he had been proceeding in the belief that it was very important to emphasize on every occasion the enormity of the offense committed by the division of Germany. He believed that if this problem were continually pressed, the Soviets might ultimately react as they finally did in the case of Austria. The Austrian problem was continually held in the focus of world opinion, and eventually the Soviets agreed to the Austrian State Treaty. The Secretary said he felt we must keep unification to the forefront and not abandon the degree of progress achieved at Geneva. He said he had gone into this in some detail in a press conference at Manila, when he had said that it would be unwise to bury topics on which progress had been made at Geneva. Three very significant agreements had been reached about Germany. The first agreement was that there was a close link between European security and the reunification of Germany. The second was the Four Power responsibility for the reunification of Germany, and the third was that Germany should be reunified by free elections in the national interests of the German people and of European security.

The Secretary said that after the press conference he had received a personal message from the Chancellor indicating that the Chancellor fully shared the views of the Secretary as expressed at Manila. Accordingly, he found it very embarrassing to have Hearst report that the Chancellor disagreed with his position as stated at Manila.

The Secretary said he could understand the Chancellor's not desiring to block progress in disarmament, but insisting on agreement to discuss reunification. This was entirely consistent with the United States thinking that no pre-conditions should be put in the way of substantial accomplishment in any field, but the President and he both felt that the next conference should certainly start where the last one left off and that gains achieved at Geneva should not be sacrificed.

Ambassador Grewe said this certainly was the German position too; the Chancellor was simply anxious to have it realized that Germany would not wish to be obstructive in international relations by insisting on agreement to discuss reunification as a pre-condition to any summit conference. He said this consideration was also important to Germany on the domestic front where there was a strong campaign against atomic warfare. In addition, he believed the Chancellor felt there should not be too much rigidity in the formulation of an agenda.

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The Secretary said he believed that public opinion in Europe generally attached more importance to a summit conference than it did in the United States. He knew of no one in public or private life in the United States who thought that any substantial progress would come out of a conference. Accordingly, it would be tragic to lose goals we are now seeking to achieve by abandoning them even before a conference began. He has yet to see any indication of any expectation of achievement from a summit conference. This being the case, we should certainly avoid paying an enormous price to get there.

Ambassador Grewe said he agreed and also concurred in the view that the problem in Germany was one of public opinion.

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